

ON TO A NEW JERUSALEM.

A Remarkable Project of Dr. Herzl of Vienna.

A good deal of interest has been raised among the more orthodox Jews, both in this country and abroad, especially among the Russian Jews, by the remarkable propaganda in favor of "Zionism," which was recently started by Dr. Theodor Herzl at Vienna, and has been carried by him as far as London, where it has received unexpected support.

The design of the energetic leaders of Zionism is to take measures for the re-establishment in Palestine of a distinctively Jewish state and government, modelled after the state which existed there in ancient times, during the period of the Judges, before the existence of royal authority under the kings. The territory near Jerusalem to which they desire to draw the Jews of the world, may be acquired, it is believed, from the Turkish sultan by purchase, and the charter of rights which he shall be asked to grant is to be approved and guaranteed by the great powers of Europe. The project has already received the favor of some of the parties whose support is essential to its success, and the projector feels confident that it will be carried into execution. A society of the leading Jews in London, known as "The Maccabees," has taken hold of the question, and there is reason to believe that several of the governments of Europe are ready to signify their approval to the design. The sultan is understood to be disposed to think of it, for a variety of reasons, one of which is that it would be the means of replenishing his impoverished treasury. The power of his majesty would be greatly strengthened if he could procure a fund of \$100,000,000, payable in 19 annual instalments, for a part of his domain which is too poor to be of much service to him. It is not desired, however, at this time, that he shall assign it to the use of the Zionists, under the guarantee of the Christian powers. The Maccabees in England and their sympathizers elsewhere could, without difficulty, furnish the purchase money.

The propaganda, of which Dr. Herzl of Vienna is the chief spirit, has assumed pressing importance on account of the alarming growth of anti-Semitism in many countries of Europe. Anti-Semitism has recently been the cause of serious demonstrations in Austria; it has gained strength in Germany; it is strong in France; it has a foothold in Italy; it is all powerful in Russia, and it is not unknown in England, though it is undemonstrative in the last named kingdom. In all parts of European Christendom there exists a peculiar dislike for the Jewish people.

It is for this reason that multitudes of Jews are anxious to obtain possession of a country that they can call their own, where they may live by themselves, apart from their enemies. What country other than that which they held in ancient times can be found for them upon this earth? What city other than Jerusalem can be again raised to glory and power as their capital?

It is known that not a few of the Russian Jews living in the United States are partakers of the desire by which their coreligionists in Russia are influenced, and listen readily to the voice of the men who are engaged in the organized movement in behalf of Zionism. The words of the new hope have reached the "Ghetto" in New York, where orthodox is predominant and where men of the type of Rabbi Jacob Joseph are ever on the alert for the call to Jerusalem. As a matter of course the rabbis of Liberalism are utterly averse to Zionism, while many other rabbis who believe in America as the promised land will have nothing to do with it.

In his visit to London last month, Dr. Herzl received an enthusiastic welcome from the Maccabean club established there, before which he delivered an address upon Zionism, explanatory of the ways and means to be adopted for "re-founding the Jewish State in Palestine," about which he had held serious conferences with persons of high standing, holding places of authority in several countries.

Some time ago, when Dr. Herzl first set forth his method of procedure, there was much opposition to it, but he says that this has largely passed away. The idea of a Jewish State was looked upon as foolish, but there cannot longer be any doubt of its practicability. Powerful rulers have been led to take thought of it. It has been received with shouts of acclamation by the suffering Jews of every land. Innumerable resolutions in its behalf have been adopted by Jewish organizations and at Jewish meetings, and steps have been taken toward the formation of a universal society of Jews for the purpose of promoting its realization. The Jews have always felt the need of a country of their own, in which they might thrive as free citizens. They seek to be delivered from the dread of persecution by which they are so often overcome. Even in those countries where they are not subject to suffering at this time, they cannot feel that they are permanently secure. For ages they have uttered the phrase which has the sound of a sigh, "leshonoh habooh berushalayim," and which must be heard for ages to come if the Jews be not restored to the land of their forefathers.

It was to the multitude of Jews who, within recent years, have come to the United States that Dr. Herzl referred when he said:

"I believe that the Jewish State will be particularly useful in those countries which are not at present openly anti-Semitic. Remember, the news that Jews are not ill treated in any locality allures the unfortunate. They immigrate. Alas, if they remain poor, and by their frugality in the requirements of life are charged with lowering the rate of wages—then they are said to ruin the original inhabitants. Alas, too, if the immigrants become prosperous—then they are told that they have sucked the blood of the people."

In the course of his address to the Maccabees in London, Dr. Herzl reminded his hearers of the fact that people of less numerical strength than the Jews had ventured to claim political proprietorship of a portion of the earth's surface, and that they had gained their claim, which they hold in safety. Such a gain for the Jews would constitute a full demonstration of their national existence.

Dr. Herzl believes that the departure of the Jews from the countries over which they are scattered would not meet with opposition from the governments of these countries: "They would be glad to see us depart." At this point he gave an interesting hint to all concerned in the following words:

"If the powers were all inclined to countenance the establishment of a more or less independent Jewish community they would certainly not concede a thing of such value to us without due compensation for the privilege. And that is perfectly just, entirely in accordance also with our interests. We must, and we certainly would, offer great material advantages in return for the legal cession to us of any territory, be it Palestine or be it another; but we must and would at the same time take the opportunity of making conditions which would permanently guarantee to us a secure future for our existence as a nation."

Dr. Herzl has drawn up a programme for the Universal Society of Jews, which is expected to undertake the task of acquiring a Jewish territory, by international law. To his mind, it is founded on

reason; it is within the limits of practical politics; it can be carried on with the means at command.

He has already laid the Jewish question before a reigning sovereign; he has carried on what he calls "negotiations" regarding it with leading statesmen; and he has had intercourse with financiers about it. He took occasion to express his grief over the recent death of Baron Hirsch, who possessed a mind broad enough to grasp the idea of political Zionism, and would surely have subscribed to it had he lived to see the extraordinary events of the last few months. The Jewish agricultural colonies already established in Palestine by Baron Edmond de Rothschild give cheer to the friends of Zionism, for there the dwellers enjoy freedom and happiness upon a blessed soil which is their own possession. "Our people all over the world," said Dr. Herzl, "talk already of Rishon le Zion in moving words and with a growing hopefulness. So the land of our fathers exists in reality. The old land renews its youth under men's busy hands. It bears flowers once again, and fruits, and perhaps, one day, one beautiful day, the land will bear again the prosperity and honor of the Jews."

Dr. Herzl's discourse before the Maccabean club which is here summarized, was received with great satisfaction by the members, some of whom at once expressed their readiness to labor for the success of the project. The discussion of the subject lasted for three hours.

The eminent Jewish author, Mr. Isaac Herzwill, told how widespread was the interest of both Christians and Jews in the founding of a Jewish state in Palestine, but he believed that more time ought to be taken for thought upon it. He feared that Dr. Herzl had not given heed to the mutual enmities and the fanaticisms that exist among the Jews of Europe.

Mr. Israel Abrahams was apprehensive that the proposed Jewish state would have no safeguard against oppression.

Rabbi S. A. Hirsch was of the opinion that Dr. Herzl would draw all Zionists to his side, for an ideal which had been kept alive so long in the Jewish heart could not be regarded as unworthy.

Mr. Joseph Jacobs believed it was the mission of Israel to establish a spiritual Jerusalem, not a Jewish state.

Mr. J. H. Levy quoted the prayer "Next year in Jerusalem," but if the ancient liturgy was to be taken literally, they would have to accept many strange things.

Mr. Rabbinowitz favored the Jewish state as a means of arresting the decay of the Jewish people. "Was it not matter for surprise that, having existed some three or four thousand years, their numbers amounted only to seven millions in all the world?"

Dr. Dvorkowitz objected to a single State for all Jews, believing that it would be torn by dissensions, such as he had witnessed in Russia, where the Misnagdim and Chassidim appealed to the government against each other.

Mr. Alfred L. Cohen said he had visited Jerusalem, and he described the difficulties to the way of founding a Jewish state in Palestine. The Jews of different countries speak different languages, and are divided into antagonistic sects which ostracize each other.

Mr. Lucien Wolf desired that Dr. Herzl's project should be thoroughly reviewed. He had made the proposal that there should be an attempt to realize the idea of a Jewish state by the acquisition of a territory in which the wanderers could be settled under certain independent or semi-independent political conditions, and where they would be free from persecution. This was a practical proposal. Whether it was practicable was another question.

One of the most interesting speeches upon the subject presented to the Maccabees of London was delivered by the distinguished and venerable English artist, Mr. Holman Hunt, R. A., whom the Jews had invited to attend the meeting. He spoke of the progress of Dr. Herzl's scheme, which was fast becoming a practical one. He closed with the following remarks:

"It would for the future be impossible for statesmen to consider any change in the government of Palestine without carefully weighing the claims of the Jews. He himself had rather come round to Dr. Herzl's view that Palestine should be acquired by the Jews as their absolute property if necessary to purchase. The Jews of England should take a foremost place in this movement. It would be wise for them to help on the realization of this scheme before any possible event came to stimulate their activity when their power of helping was diminished. Dr. Herzl's plan must no longer be regarded as a dream. It was eminently time to appoint a strong committee of inquiry to watch the matter, and to prepare itself for decisive action whenever occasion should arise."

Before the meeting closed the Maccabees appointed the committee which had been suggested by Mr. Holman Hunt.

In any event, Dr. Herzl has already stirred up an interest in Zionism among the Jewish people the world over. There is much to be done, however, before it will be feasible to found a new Jewish state in Palestine.